

Hello Everyone:

As always, it's wonderful to be able to report to you once again on my service this past year as your representative on the Board of Aldermen. In addition to issuing annual reports and publishing notices in the Newton TAB, I periodically post items, including this report, on the city's website at: <http://www.ci.newton.ma.us/Aldermen/constituents.asp> . I also have been holding constituent office hours at the Senior Center.

My Ward 2 colleagues and I have pressed to keep Newton residents as informed and engaged in the Newton North project as possible. We have been successful in the establishment of a citizen liaison committee, the first ever created for a public project. As a result, Newton residents can access updated information on the project online at: www.ci.newton.ma.us/liaison/links.html ; can contact the liaison committee at: nnhsliaisoncommittee@newtonma.gov ; and retrieve updates of the committee's activities at: www.ci.newton.ma.us/HSTF/index.htm. I continue to advocate for a web link so that citizens can visually monitor the progress of the project safely and conveniently.

With the advent of the liaison committee, we have been able to connect affected residents with city officials and contractors engaged in the project. This summer focused on the difficult task of relocating some 350+ parking spaces into areas where we have worked to manage existing congestion. The plan is viewable at: www.ci.newton.ma.us/liaison/NNHS%20permits%20aug%2007%20.pdf .

At the outset of this past year's session, I commented that the Board was entering a most challenging period. Without doubt, a good portion of the city's physical plant infrastructure is in critical condition. A number of our roadways and elementary schools are in disrepair. Our public safety facilities, especially our fire stations, remain in deplorable condition. And the estimated costs of the North project exceed the financing plan previously presented by the mayor. The question remains whether any new financing plan, adjusted to a project now estimated to cost in the range of \$150-\$160 million, can also support other needs in addition to the operating budget, which this year relied on various non-recurring sources to an ever greater extent. The Blue-Ribbon Commission rendered its report and recommendations www.ci.newton.ma.us/BlueRibbon/Reports/2007/Final%20Report%20of%20the%20BRC%20Online%20Version.pdf . The fact is, absent some significant changes, the city will soon need to look at some form of debt exclusion or operating override.

So that the burden of compensating for past deferral of necessary maintenance doesn't fall entirely on present day Newton taxpayers, I favor exploration of alternative ways to fund certain city projects. We have, for instance, a largely untapped source of potential support among the many Newton North alumni/ae who might embrace an opportunity to contribute to a new Newton North. Similar efforts could be undertaken in other areas. By example, a hallmark of the city's community preservation program has been to leverage private resources to supplement public resources in procuring additional open space, recreational resources, historic preservation and affordable housing. This year, among other initiatives, we have been able to significantly expand the city's frontage on Crystal Lake and take initial steps to preserve and enhance one of the city's few remaining 18th century properties, the Durant/Kenrick estate.

The vision of the city's future is being shaped in a number of ways. I favor formation of a charter commission to review the form of our municipal government, and have docketed an item to review the Board's powers in respect to approval of public building projects. There is no doubt the city's increasing revenue needs will affect future development. The proposed Chestnut Hill

development will test the nature and scale, as well as the net benefits and burdens we anticipate from that kind of development. I continue to favor village-based development near public transportation, as well as air right development over the Mass Turnpike. After a number of years of work by the Comprehensive Planning Advisory Committee, on which I served, a draft Comprehensive Plan has been docketed before the Board and will serve to guide discussion on the city's future development. This plan can be viewed at:

www.ci.newton.ma.us/Planning/CPAC/com%20plan%202005/commplan.asp

Our community's commitment to natural turf fields means that synthetic surfaces should only be considered to the extent existing natural surfaced fields cannot sustain present and projected demand, as it presently appears. The Newton North project calls for one multi-use synthetic surface track and field. We should have a similar one at South after resolving the environmental and drainage issues.

As always, I am interested in hearing from you, whether it is during my annual fall walking tour of the district, or by contacting me at: (617) 796-1701 or at:

slinsky@newtonma.gov